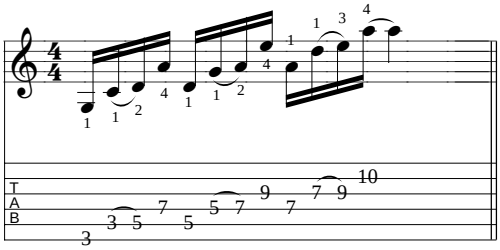
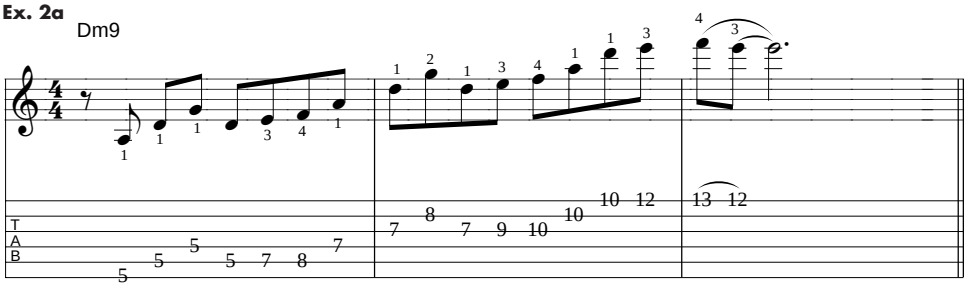
Suddenly Sequenced

BY SHANE THERIOT

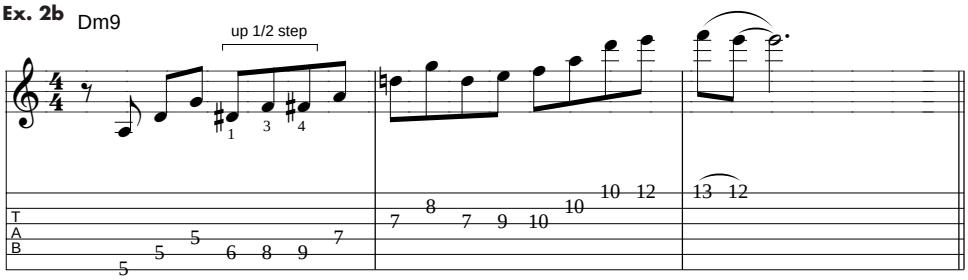
Ex. 1 Am9



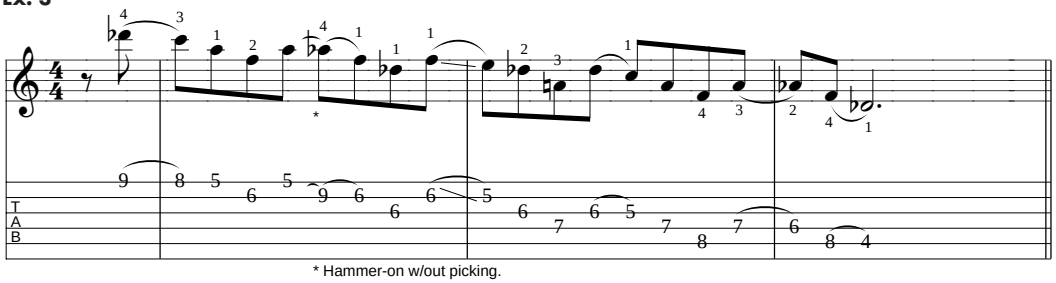
Ex. 2a Dm9



Ex. 2b Dm9

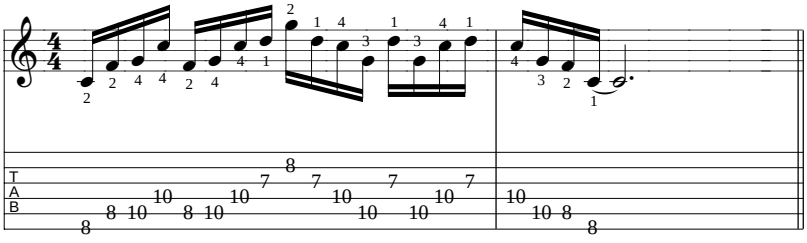


Ex. 3 D♭aug



* Hammer-on w/out picking.

Ex. 4 Csus

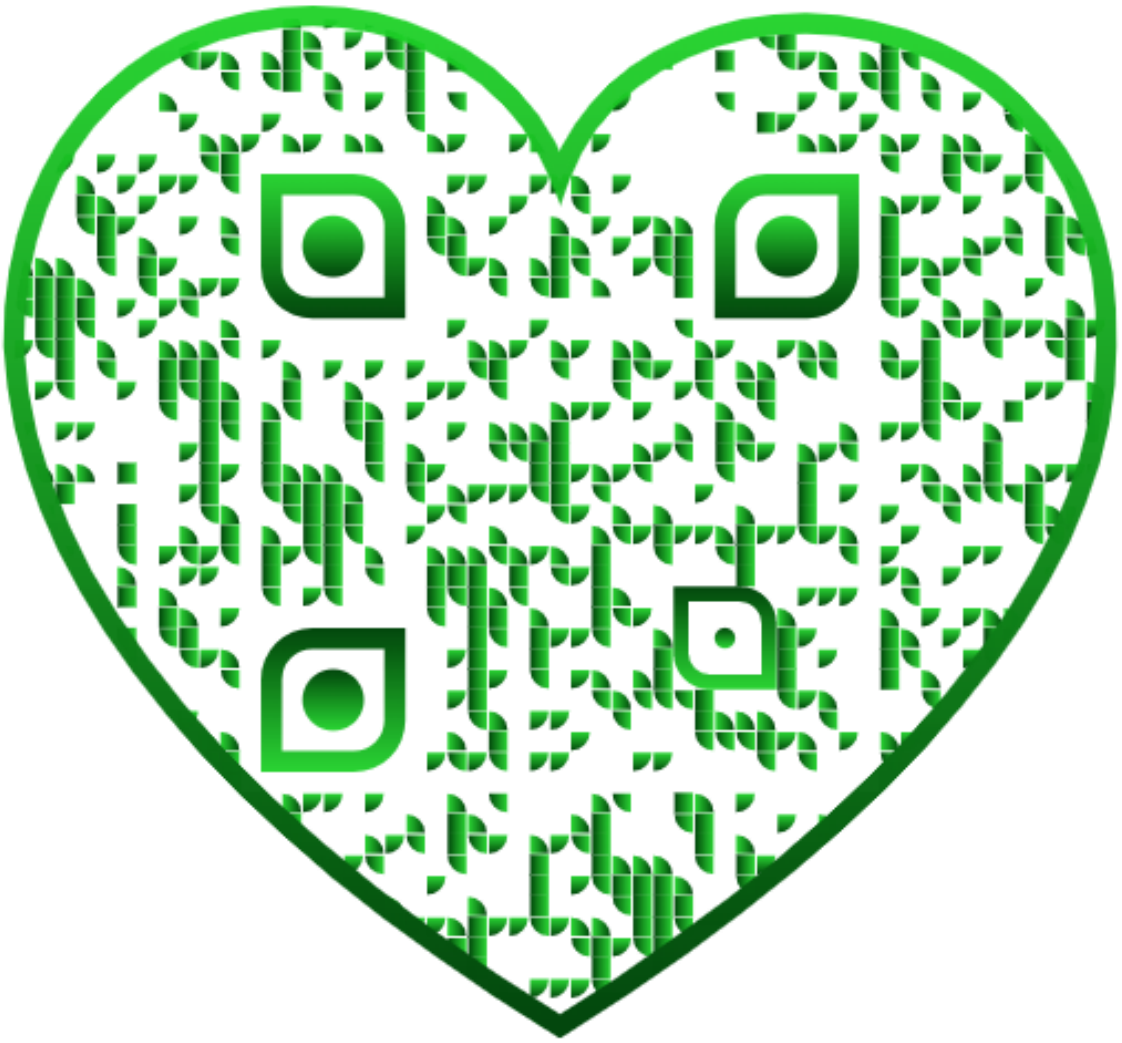


A SEQUENCE CONSISTS OF A series of notes arranged in a formal pattern. For example, a major scale is a type of scale sequence. The following sequenced patterns are based on *intervallic* ideas. If your goal is to avoid ruts, sequences will help you uncover new melodic pathways on the fretboard.

Ex. 1 is a melodic sequence inspired by keyboardist Chick Corea. In addition to sounding good over *Am9*, this phrase works over *Em7* and *Cmaj7*. Notice how each beat starts with a perfect fourth and ends with a perfect fifth. These large intervals lend a sense of space to the quickly ascending line.

Map, then mangle. Played over *Dm9*, **Ex. 2a** creates a similarly open sound. But wait, there's more: To give the phrase an

"If you practice fast and sloppy, you'll get good at what you practice."—Sal Salvador, July '74 *GP*



outside twist in the style of pianist McCoy Tyner, let's move bar 1's last two beats up a half-step (**Ex. 2b**).

An augmented sequence, **Ex. 3** is based on an Allan Holdsworth phrase. The slurs (five pull-offs, a hammer-on, and a slide) help create Holdsworth's trademark legato tone.

Our final phrase is a tricky suspended sequence in the style of saxophonist Michael Brecker (**Ex. 4**). Play this over a *Csus* chord—a *C* chord with no 3 (*F*). Experiment with *C-F-G* (1-4-5) and *C-D-G* (1-2-5) voicings.

The next step. Play these examples backwards and transpose them to different keys. Mix parts of the phrases into your favorite licks to give them a new lease on life. Finally, craft your own lines from intervallic sequences.

Shane Theriot plays and records with the Neville Brothers. An honors grad of L.A.'s famed G.I.T., Theriot has taught at the Atlanta Institute of Music. For info on his solo album, which features Art Neville, Victor Wooten, and Jo-El Sonnier, call Audiophile Imports at (908) 996-7311.

BOOK BROWSING

THE JAZZ GUITAR CHORD BIBLE COMPLETE

FROM ITS TITLE, YOU MIGHT think Warren Nunes' *The Jazz Guitar Chord Bible Complete* ($19.95, from Warner Bros. Publications) is simply another chord dictionary. Not so: Far more than a mere collection of grips, this 187-page book is a potent exploration of jazz harmony. Nunes knows that the secret to learning new voicings is to play them in progressions, so he has packed his book with scores of two- and four-bar harmonic workouts that are musical and easy to play.

When Nunes introduces a chord type, he presents its various voicings using both fretboard grids and music notation. This dual-view approach allows you to visualize finger placement *and* observe a chord's component intervals. Even if you don't read music well, you'll benefit by seeing each voicing's relative density and pitch spread. Very cool.

After analyzing a particular chord and its inversions, Nunes weaves the voicings into vamps, and that's where the fun begins. It's a comprehensive journey: By simply working through the changes, you'll learn how to handle passing chords, add stepwise lines within the harmony, and find alternative ways to play common cadences.

Nunes divides the book into three chord families—major, minor, and dominant. Within these basic categories, he examines dozens of specific flavors, ranging from simple seventh chords to such esoteric sounds as major 9♭5, minor/major 9, and dom7♭5♯9.

In his foreword Nunes writes, "Every type of sound is covered, including passing chords and altered chords. Other chord voicings may be possible, but only the most logical, practical, and applicable chord voicings are presented." Drawn from a section on dominant 7s, the following example illustrates Nunes' meat-and-potatoes approach to mastering harmony. These four IIm7-V7-I cadences sound fresh, yet they're progressions you can put to immediate use.

The Jazz Guitar Chord Bible Complete belongs in your library—even if you're not a jazz guitarist. Play one progression a day, and in a year you'll be a chord monster.

—ANDY ELLIS

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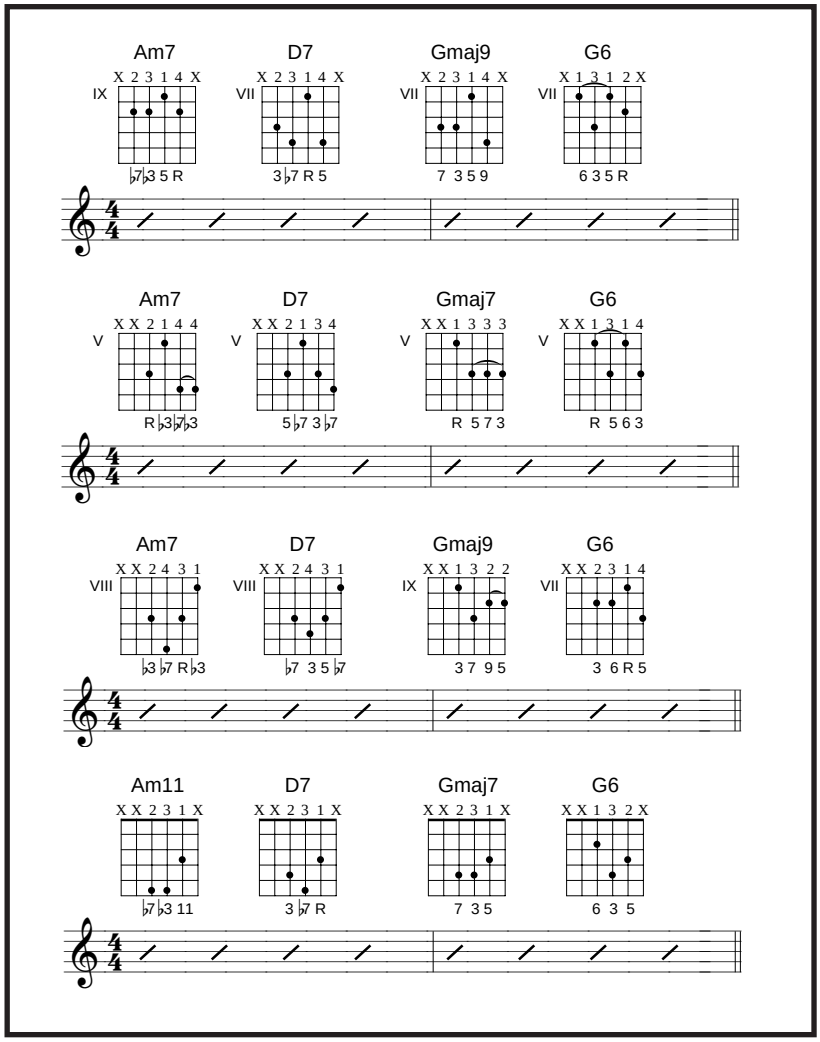


Sequence Secrets

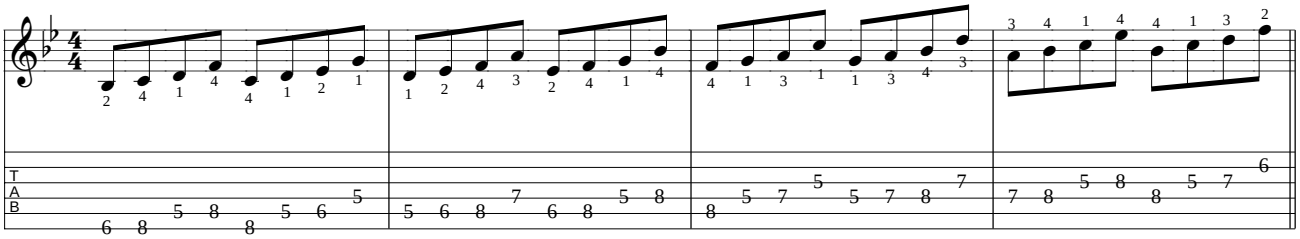
BY MORRIS ACEVEDO

KEYBOARDIST HERBIE HANCOCK has a mind-blowing ability to improvise long lines that build tension and raise his solos to another level. One way he does this is by repeating a musical phrase or sequence up or down a scale, over a set of chord changes. While such sequences lie nicely on the keyboard, they can be difficult to visualize on the fretboard. This means that in a guitar solo, sequences often sound premeditated or planned out—too much like a cool lick rather than an improvised musical statement. Fortunately, there *are* ways for guitarists to make sequences sound more spontaneous.

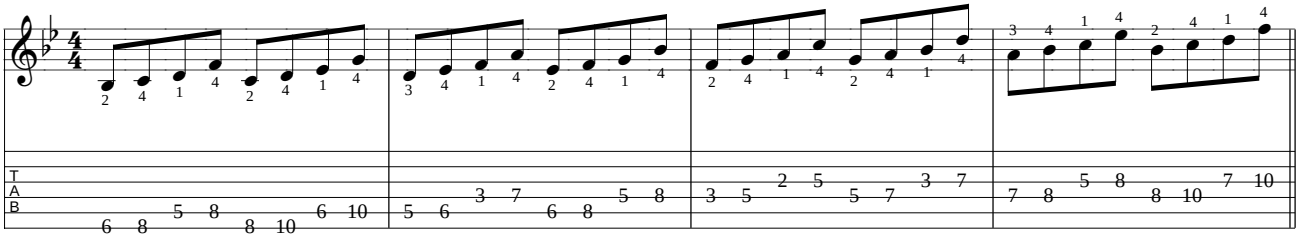
Remapping sequences. First, try **Ex. 1**—a sequence that uses notes from a fifth-position *B♭* major scale. The convoluted fingerings in this four-bar phrase are tricky. You could practice them over and over until you memorize the intricacies, but the results would still sound mechanical.

It's often easier to improvise sequences by playing *up and down* the strings instead

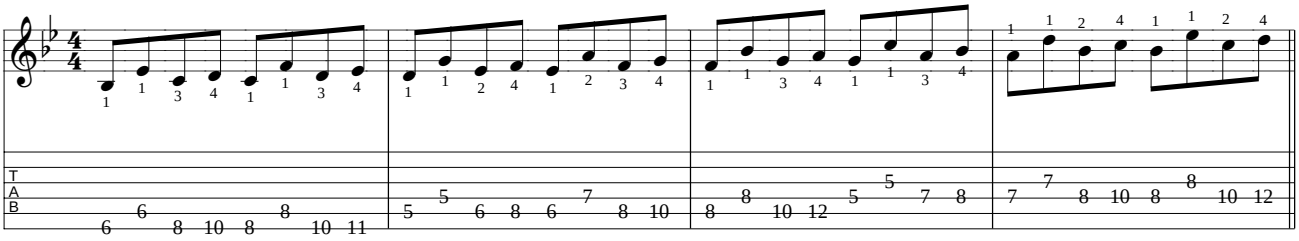
Ex. 1



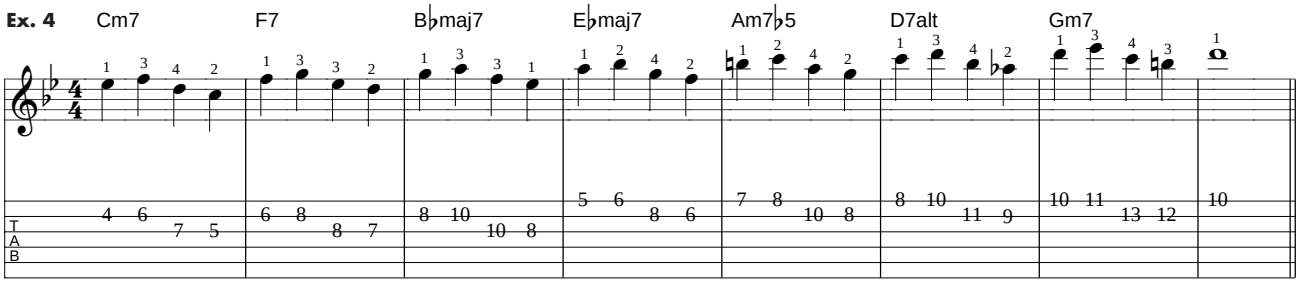
Ex. 2



Ex. 3



Ex. 4



"When I'm practicing, I'm all mind; when I'm improvising, I'm all heart."—Larry Coryell, Dec. '74 *GP*

of *across* them. You get a more linear view playing along the fretboard—similar to how a pianist sees the keyboard. **Ex. 2** contains the same notes as the previous example, but they've been refingered for a more linear flow. This version is easier to play, isn't it?

Notice how each sequence is composed of four notes. Think of it as a pair of melodic intervals—a major or minor second, followed by a major or minor third. In this case, we shift positions to play each sequence module: We're in the fifth and sixth positions in bar 1; the third and fifth in bar 2; the second and third in bar 3; and the fifth and seventh in bar 4.

Helpful hints. As you map your own sequences, keep these ideas in mind:

• Try to maintain a consistent note layout for each sequence module.

• For starters, play two modules on a string group, and then switch to the next string group. This isn't an ironclad rule, however. You could, say, play three sequence modules on one string group before switching. Try remapping Ex. 2 this way. In time, you'll develop a natural instinct for the best moment to switch from one string group to another. Look for the jump that feels easiest to fret while maintaining a steady tempo.

• For variety, reverse the notes in one or more of the sequence's intervals.

• Experiment with different combinations of intervals.

For instance, in **Ex. 3**, we again play notes from a *B♭* major scale, but this time our four-note module consists of a perfect fourth followed by a major second (except for bar 3, beat four, which is a minor second).

You'll really have a handle on sequences when you can play them through different scales and across different chords, as in **Ex. 4**. Here we move a series of seconds through seven chords, adjusting the melodic interval from major to minor to accommodate each bar's harmony.

Sequences can provide you with a lifetime of ideas, so take some time to discover and master your own patterns.

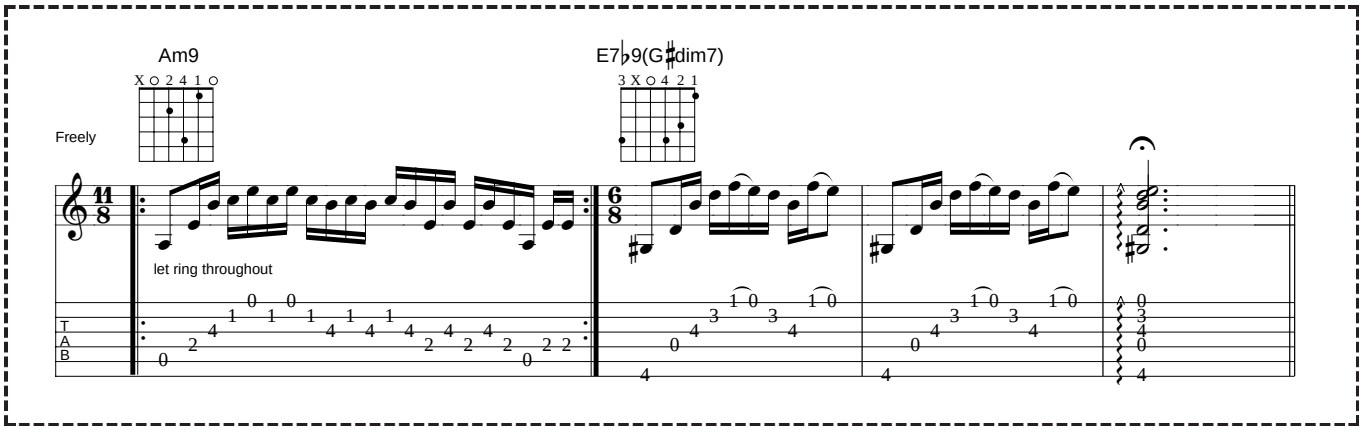
Jazz guitarist Morris Acevedo performs and teaches in the San Francisco area. For info on Acevedo's trio and CDs, visit his Web page at www.planeteria.net/home/morris.

Lick of the Month

SHEETS OF SOUND

OUR FEBRUARY LICK CHAMP IS JAMES MCKEEVER, from Los Angeles, California. He writes, "Here is an arpeggio-based idea that's inspired by *Passion, Grace and Fire*—the second trio album by John McLaughlin, Paco de Lucía, and Al DiMeola. Use alternate picking and an aggressive attack—and go buy the album!"

Don't stress over the time signatures. Set a metronome to count slow eighth-notes, and mentally subdivide 11/8 into 6/8 + 5/8. The real action comes from your picking hand. If you take your time, you'll soon get the hang of the rhythm.



Send us your candidate for Lick of the Month (preferably notated *and* on cassette), along with a brief explanation of why it's cool and how to play it. If we select your offering, you'll get a funky custom T-shirt that's available *only* to Lick of the Month club members. Mail your entry to Lick of the Month, *Guitar Player*, 411 Borel Ave. #100, San Mateo, CA 94402. Include your name, address, and phone number. Materials won't be returned, and please don't call the office to check the status of your submission. You'll get your shirt if your lick is chosen.

Artful Aeolian

BY ANDY ELLIS

WE'VE BEEN EXPLORING MODES IN the past four issues. We're not done yet but we *are* over the hump, so now is an excellent time to step back and look at where we've come, where we're headed, and how each lesson in this modal Back Track series supplies a piece to a larger puzzle.

First, a quick review: In Oct. '99, we charted the seven modes of the major scale and their formulas. Since then, we've poked into the Dorian (Nov. '99), Mixolydian (Dec. '99), and Phrygian (Jan. '00) modes. To complete the first phase of our journey, we'll get acquainted with two more essential modes—Aeolian (this month) and Lydian (next month).

Beyond modes. Getting a grip on modal basics is part of a broader Back Track quest. Once we've made friends with Lydian, we'll apply what we've learned about modes by using them to improvise over tricky progressions. We'll then compare two improvisational strategies (the "glove scale" and "umbrella scale" techniques), and learn how to combine them for maximum flexibility.

As we dig into Aeolian, keep this in mind: Though each Back Track lesson can stand alone, you'll get the most from this modal series if you have each installment within easy reach. An occasional review of the previous material works wonders to accelerate the learning process.

Aeolian construction. Like Dorian and Phrygian, Aeolian is a minor mode. To transform any major scale to Aeolian, lower the major scale's 3rd, 6th, and 7th tones by a half-step. For example, apply this ♭3, ♭6, and ♭7 formula to an *A* major scale (*A*, *B*, *C*♯, *D*, *E*, *F*♯, *G*♯), and you get *A* Aeolian: *A*, *B*, *C*, *D*, *E*, *F*, *G*. This process works with all 12 major scales.

Aeolian contains a minor-7th arpeggio built from the mode's root. **Ex. 1** shows a one-octave *A* Aeolian pattern. Notice the *Am7* arpeggio within the scale. This relationship exists in all keys: *E* Aeolian includes an *Em7* arpeggio, *G* Aeolian includes a *Gm7* arpeggio, and so on.

To appreciate the musical relationship between Aeolian and its internal minor 7, play Ex. 1's *Am7* voicing, followed by the *A* Aeolian pattern. As you move up and down the scale, listen for the chord tones—*A*, *C*, *E*, and *G*.

Ex. 2 offers two useful Aeolian fingerings. These moveable patterns take their name from the circled roots. For example, play the first pattern at the third position to get *G* Aeolian. Played at the third position, the second pattern would yield *E* Aeolian. Okay so far?

Tuning into Aeolian. The next step is to make music with Aeolian (**Ex. 3**). For starters, record a minute or two of Gtr. 2's changes—*Am7*, *Cm7*, and *Cm9*—at a nice, slow tempo. Now play Aeolian patterns in Gtr. 1. Bar 1 ascends in *A* Aeolian over *Am7*, and bar 2 descends in *C* Aeolian over *Cm7* and *Cm9*. Once you can play through each mode in strict note sequence, start creating your own melodies. Some tips:

• Vary your rhythms.

• Be selective: In each measure, play only a few notes from the mode.

• A mode's notes fall into one of two categories: Each pitch will either be a chord tone or a non-chord tone. Chord tones blend with the harmony, non-chord tones stand out from the harmony. A savvy soloist will weave both sounds into a phrase.

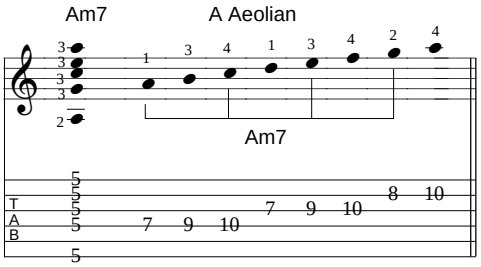
• Skipping strings automatically generates wide intervals and forces you to really master a pattern.

• *A* Aeolian and *C* Aeolian share common tones (*C* and *G*, for example). Identify these common tones and try sustaining them across the bar line.

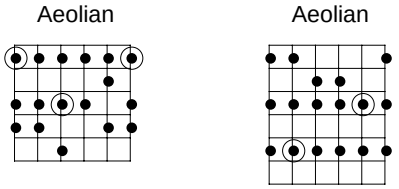
• To generate fresh *A* Aeolian and *C* Aeolian patterns, convert your favorite *A* and *C* major scale forms to Aeolian by applying the magic ♭3, ♭6, and ♭7 formula. (For an overview of major scale patterns, refer to the Jan. '99 Back Track, "Six Essential Major Scale Forms.")

All of us—no matter how long we've played or how skilled we are—have gaps in our knowledge. Back Track is an ongoing Sessions series designed to fill these holes and inspire musical breakthroughs. Got a topic you'd like to see us address? Send your question to Back Track, c/o *Guitar Player*, 411 Borel Ave. #100, San Mateo, CA 94402, or e-mail it to guitplyr@mfi.com.

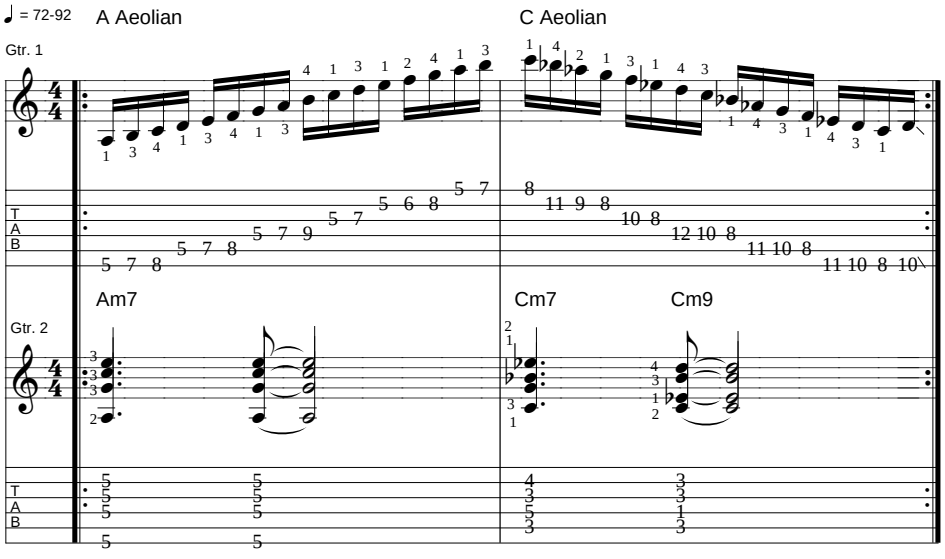
Ex. 1



Ex. 2



Ex. 3



"I'd make mistakes and turn them into hot licks."—Willie Nelson, Oct. '76 *GP*

Eric Clapton's "Key to the Highway" Turnaround

"You need to let what's inside express itself without controlling it. The minute you start to polish it, hone it, and look at it too much, it's gone."
—ERIC CLAPTON

"THERE'S A CERTAIN CONSTRUCTION BASED on *feeling* controlling technique," Eric Clapton told readers in the July '85 *GP*. "That has to be the case, not the other way around. If you really want to do something tricky, just do it once—don't keep repeating it. The objective is to make everyone feel like they've just been struck with a bolt of lightning, and that's very difficult to do time after time."

As you ponder Clapton's words, try this two-bar turnaround—one of the variations he played in "Key to the Highway," from *Layla & Other Assorted Love Songs*. To appreciate how well this simple phrase fits the harmony, record the changes and then try the melody. Except for a bluesy *C♮* played against *A7* in bar 2, the turnaround is composed entirely of chord tones. Notice how the 12/8 time signature automatically nudges you into a barroom shuffle. Cool! —AE

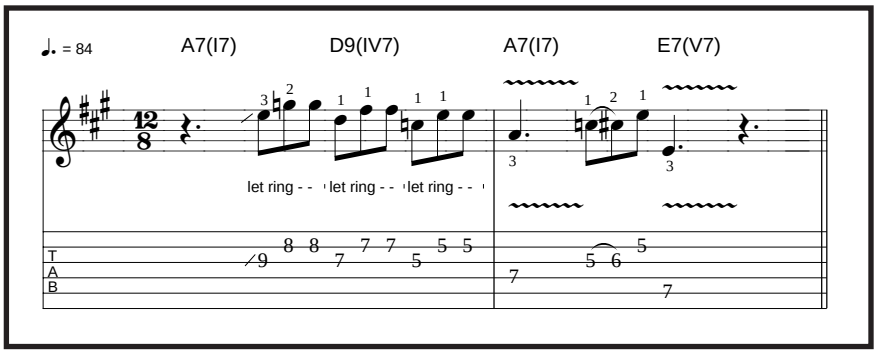


PHOTO: JON SIEVERT